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VOL. 11 NO. 1
JANUARY 1981
ISSUE NO. 216

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

(R) 2-2-81

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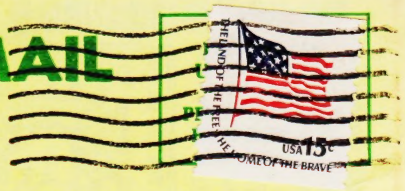
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

FIRST CLASS MAIL

OAKLAND CA
JAN 31 PM
1981



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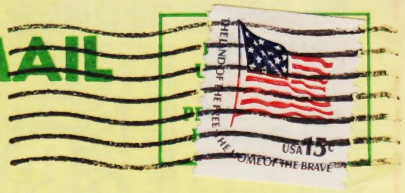

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ON THE COVER

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority depicts its Saturday ski train like this in a current timecard-brochure. The train leaves at 8:20am from Boston's North Station and arrives at 9:43am at Fitchburg, where one shuttle bus serves Wachusett Mountain and another runs to Mount Watatic (both take about a half hour). Return departure from Fitchburg is at 4:54pm, with a 6:25 arrival at North Station. In this issue, read of the problems of the MBTA in an article by RTN's Pete Roehm.

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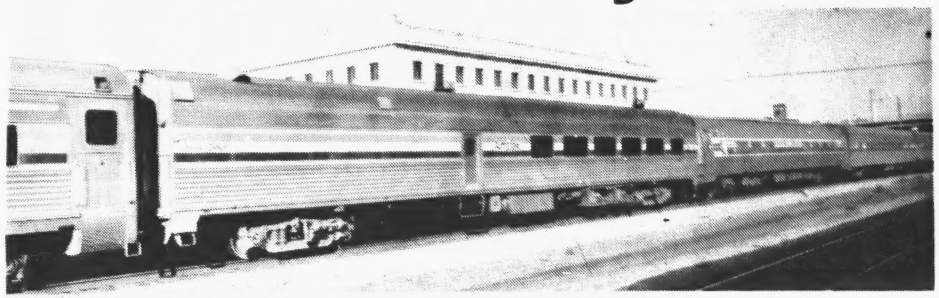
Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $18.00 per year; single copy 75¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Southern California; James Feeney, New York; Jack Ferry, Illinois; Adron Hall, Mississippi; Kenneth Maylath, Maryland; Peter Roehm, Massachusetts; Jerome Rosenfeld, New Jersey.

train of the year



RTN'S annual Train of the Year award for 1980 goes to the Heritage Fleet trains. These include the LAKE SHORE LIMITED, the BROADWAY LIMITED and the CRESCENT.

Each year the editors of RTN select the train that in their opinion has contributed the most to American rail travel thru such means as increased ridership, patron interest or some innovation that promotes better train travel.

The use of the rebuilt and electrified conventional Heritage cars on these trains, and especially on the LAKE SHORE LIMITED, has elicited very positive rider response and has in some cases contributed greatly to better on-time performance. Amtrak is to be commended for the decision to rebuild and employ these cars on a wide scale. The use of the cars also contributes to economy in passenger train operation and preserves a number of cars that are well-built and useful but suffered only from the outmoded nature of their on-board equipment. RTN hopes that Amtrak will continue and expand this rebuilding program to include many domes and other fine cars that appeal greatly to the train traveler and stimulate patronage of passenger trains.

This is RTN's fifth annual award. Previous awards were: 1976 - LAKE SHORE LIMITED; 1977 - PIONEER; 1978 - SOUTHERN CRESCENT; 1979 - Five "hit list" trains (FLORIDIAN, HILLTOPPER, LONE STAR, NATIONAL LIMITED and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA).

(Photo above is of Heritage Fleet cars on the LAKE SHORE LIMTED at Utica NY. Dining car 8504 is in center of photo. Photo by Peter Bretz.)

★ RAIL SUPPORTERS ASSESS ATTITUDE OF REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TOWARD AMTRAK & TRANSIT

President Reagan's Transportation Secretary nominee, Drew Lewis Jr., was okayed for the job by a Senate panel on Jan 19. The nominee for Deputy Transportation Secretary, Darrell Trent, was similarly approved the week before that.

In hearings before the Senate Commerce Committee in early January, Lewis said that the economic plight of the U.S. auto industry is the most pressing problem in transportation that the U.S. has. He indicated that he favored reducing the government's role in other forms of transportation. Earlier (as reported last issue), a Reagan task force on transportation recommended reducing government expenditures for mass transit and cutting out "money-losing" Amtrak long distance routes. (A Washington source has since told RTN that no attempt had been made to reach a consensus on the report, but instead one person wrote each section of it; thus, one man alone recommended the Amtrak cuts, and when more heads come together on the question the cuts might be forestalled. However, the source noted, Office of Management and Budget head Stockman is clearly "after" Amtrak.)

Meanwhile, rail supporters are alarmed and are already gearing up for action to

page 3

protect trains from being cut. James O. Clark writes in the Illinois Association of RR Passengers' Jan newsletter: "Some observers foresee the possibility of drastic, immediate cuts in Amtrak service early in the Reagan administration. Others are somewhat more optimistic, noting that support for rail passenger service crosses party lines, and that Amtrak might survive fairly well intact, especially if it can come up with ways to cut costs without cutting back on service. What is obvious is that supporters of rail passenger service are going to have to recouple their efforts..." Notes the Missouri-Kansas Rail Passenger Coalition, "It is almost certain that we'll soon face another funding crisis in Congress. It is of the utmost importance that all individuals interested in maintaining at least what we already have, write and make their views known..." Other passenger rail-supporting groups are thinking in similar vein. And along with the alarm is a necessary "wait and see" admonition, as it is too early to tell exactly what the new administration will try to do in its budget-cutting efforts toward rail passenger and mass transit service. But supporters will be ready to respond quickly when the administration's actions become manifest.

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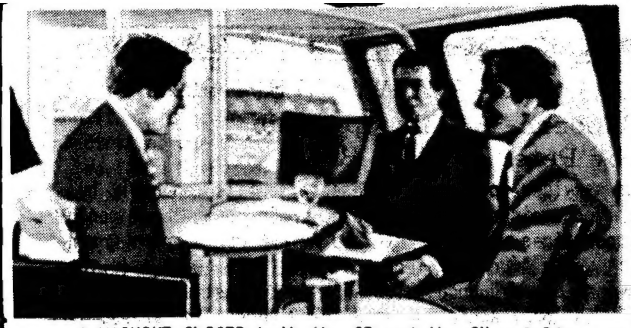

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COLD WINTER WEATHER played havoc with VIA Rail Canada schedules in Dec and Jan. The passenger carrier still relies upon steam-heated trains, unlike Amtrak. Particularly in the Maritime provinces, there were difficulties, and they were coupled with some rail accidents that made life miserable for passengers. On Dec 20 at 2:50am the first passenger extra for Gaspe from Montreal derailed at Richmond, Que., with the two steam generators (15457 & 15464), baggage car 9486, diner 1347, and coaches 5627 & 5519 derailed. The train had detoured via St. Hyacinthe and Danville Subdivisions because of a small derailment on the Drummonville Sub. No buses or other equipment were available, so passengers of this train (#16) were kept aboard at Richmond and fed until 3pm when a train arrived from Montreal to take them on. On Dec 31 train 12, the ATLANTIC, was struck in the last two cars at Windsor, Que., by CN Extra 2573 West at 8:50pm. The cars hit were deadheading and were unoccupied, but the train was delayed about 5 hours. On Dec 28 the daily freight train 394 (Montreal-Portland ME) derailed in Richmond, Que., delaying the already 5-hours late train 11, the westbound ATLANTIC, which finally arrived in Montreal 7 hours late. That train ran via the CP line between Sherbrooke and St Jean, Que., and on the CN Rouses Point Sub. to St Lambert, Que. VIA Rail was reported so short of equipment that they ran the very old and uncomfortable commuter cars on the Montreal-Senneterre and Montreal-Chicoutimi trains. These cars, from the 1920's, lack reclining seats and washrooms. Records from the Montreal station from Dec 18 thru 24 show nearly all trains late, with lateness ranging from about 15 minutes to nearly 12 hours late, and averaging around three hours. Records from Jan 4 show (at Ottawa) trains 1 and 39 cancelled, train 33 two hours late, train 34 ½-hour late, train 35 on time. At Quebec, train 25 was cancelled. At Toronto, crews "forgot" to assemble cars for one train. At Montreal Central Station, 500 people were waiting for trains. On Jan 5, train 32 was cancelled and buses substituted. Rapido 63 to Toronto boarded 25mins after scheduled departure time. The following trains were late: #12, #134, #17, #15. Transport 2000 President Guy Chartrand said "it's unfortunately not the level of service that would encourage people to travel by train." T-2000 was looking into what action it should take.

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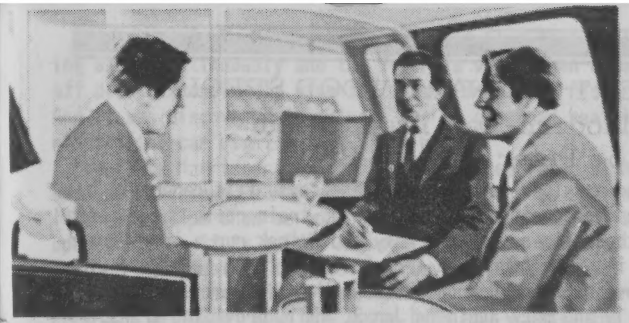
CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION was to decide on Jan 28 whether to order the NIAGARA RAINBOW extended to Toronto. The National Association of RR Passengers called upon its members to write the CTC in support of the extension.

MP LES BENJAMIN of Regina West on Jan 2 called upon the Canadian nation to look to electrification of rail and commuter lines to help resolve the energy crisis.



WHILE AMTRAK'S TURBOTRAINS have been scrapped, VIA Rail still operates, and advertises (as in the brochure drawing at the left) dome Turbotrain service.....

OTTAWA TO MONTREAL Train 36 recently added a stop at Alexandria, at 6:19pm, "in order to meet passenger demand".....

A WASHOUT CLOSED both the CP and the CN mainlines near Hope, B.C. on Dec 27, and closed the Trans-Canada Highway as well. On the CN, damage was a weakened trestle over the Coquihalla River. The lines were reopened on Jan 5.

SPEED LIMIT REVISION plan that would have allowed buses to travel at over 70mph on freeways was rejected by the Quebec Minister of Transport last month.

CANADIAN ROCKY SKI tours are being advertised by VIA Rail. This is the first time in years, notes Transport 2000, that a railway is selling such tours nationally.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

SEPTA WILL DISCONTINUE its Philadelphia-Pottsville commuter service about Mar 1; public hearings on the discontinuance were being held in the last days of January. The Bethlehem branch runs north of Quakertown also look like victims. SEPTA is in a severe budget crunch, and plans other cuts as well.

GRUMMAN'S FLXIBLE BUSES have some new cracks in them. The manufacturer found more cracks in the frames forward of the rear axle, and warned operators on Jan 24 of the potential safety problem. Grumman said it would repair the cracks at no cost.

NEW YORK'S MTA next month will begin tests of an articulated bus designed by Renault.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY Board in early Feb will issue a report calling on Congress to set minimum safety standards for U.S. rail rapid transit systems.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION on Jan 19, one day before the new administration took over, proposed legislation to change the formula for allocating capital and operating assistance funds to large cities, basing it on the level of service actually provided the public. This would reward cities that "increase ridership significantly or manage to meet a larger percentage of their operating costs from the fare box", the DOT said.

TESTING OF TROLLEYS on the San Diego Trolley line was scheduled to begin Jan 26, with cars towed to the Naval Base station by SD&AE Rwy locomotives, where they would run under their own power to National City. The Wall Street Journal of Jan 19 carried an informative article on the line, as did Road & Track magazine (Feb).

A POWER FAILURE in Mexico City on Jan 15 at the morning rush hour trapped commuters in subways and snarled traffic as traffic lights failed.

LOS ANGELES'S PLANNED Downtown People Mover system will probably be elevated standard gauge rail, with 40-foot streetcars and third rail pickup, powered by efficient linear induction motors. Supporters hope it will be the start of a retional system. Last November the area voted to accept an added sales tax to fund it, and the legality of that measure is to be decided by the courts by July 1.

BOSTON'S TRANSIT SYSTEM has threatened to shut down all Sunday service Feb 1.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNI'S expansion of service with its new Boeing-Vertol cars on Dec 17 went smoothly. West of Twin Peaks tunnel, the new cars uncouple and run separately on different lines under the newly-inaugurated operation extension.

RIDING THE FORT LEONARD WOOD SPECIAL

A Modern-Day Troop Train

by Peter Putnam Bretz

When the armed services move troops these days, it's generally by plane, and only occasionally does a troop train roll. Last month was one of those times when the Army had Amtrak run a troop train (officially it was a "furlough train") for it. An Amfleet train was run from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri--in deepest Ozark country--to New York City on Dec 19 and back again on Jan 3, 1981, providing transportation for the Christmas exodus. We joined the train at Penn Station, New York, and rode the complete return leg to Missouri.

At 2:30pm we were pre-boarding the train at Penn Station's Track 14, along with Amtrak officials, Army non-coms, et al. Amtrak's Mr. Leonardo Contardo, chief of Government and Military, coordinated the trip. It was he who arranged to permit civilian personnel (read: railfans) to travel on this return run. Ron Goldfeder, from the Chesapeake Division, Railroad Enthusiasts, Inc., had taken our reservations previously and arranged to have all 16 of us sit together in one group. Once we were settled, we went outside to check the consist.

Behind E-60 engine 967 were baggage car 1267, Amfleet cars 21001, 21179, Amcafe 20007, 21025, 21148, Amcafe 20014, 21142, 21094. All the coaches were 84-seaters! And bringing up the rear was newly-electrified slumbercoach 2052 (16-10 ex-NYC 22rmt "Dunkirk Harbour"), the crew car.

On-Board Service Inspector Bobby L. Elliot, St. Louis Division of Amtrak, was in charge of the train, and he bustled up and down,wearing his hard hat. Soon the soldiers came trooping down the stairs and were herded along the platform to the last two cars. There were to be 182 boarding here, but only 165 showed up. Various Army train people, guards and non-commissioned officers and regular officers were assigned rooms in the slumbercoach. As a reporter, I was able also to secure a slumbercoach room.

We got out of New York just two minutes late from a scheduled departure time of 3:15pm. The locomotive was coupled up behind the sleeper, and pulled our train backwards to 30th Street, Philadelphia. We stopped at Newark and Trenton, where about 40 more passengers boarded.

At Philadelphia, a big mob prepared to board. We arrived eight minutes early at 4:42. The E-60 engine came off and back-to-back F40s #332 and 329 were put on next to the baggage car. It seemed that a number of soldiers missed the train in New York and now arrived on the Metroliner service that left Penn Station at 3:30. It came in with AEM-7 #912 and three Amfleet cars. Soon there is a rush of green everywhere--soldiers are rushing down the platform and throwing their duffle bags into the baggage car. Mothers and sisters kiss them goodbye at the coach doors. "Bye now!" "Keep your feet warm, sonny!" It's just like old times.

We leave Philadelphia at 5:10pm. After five more board at Paoli, we have 308 passengers on board.

The Amcafe serves snack food only--no full meals (altho crew members did get dinners, no one else did). We try the 'Amburger (old, bad style), other sandwiches, etc. Only two kinds of beer are available: Budweiser and Lite, but there was plenty. Ben Phillips, LSA in charge of the extra food stored in the baggage car (who does an excellent job, always smiling and everywhere at once), comes up with a few cases of Ballentine ale, but that is consumed quickly. The roast beef sandwich is listed as a "special" for $1.25.

All in all, the troops are relatively quiet and well-behaved. The aisles are crowded as we pass thru from time to time. Big stereo radios blare different types of music. One guy even has a portable television set. This being the "new" Army, there is a smattering of women in uniform. Most seem paired off already.

Back in the slumbercoach there is a toilet that won't shut off. It is spewing water continuously and the floor is wet. Even managing to shut the water valve off doesn't completely stem the tide. Before Harrisburg, the car is out of water. And it was discovered that there was no overhead heat in the rooms--in this newly-electrified car right out of Beech Grove!

We leave Harrisburg at 7:19, four minutes late, with 328 on board. Stops are made at Lewistown, Huntingdon and Tyrone, and we arrive in Altoona a half hour late. It's after 11pm when we approach Horseshoe Curve, and at the Dutch door looking out upon the snow it is cold! A ghostly engineer waves to me from the K-4 on display and the headlight of the F40 prances among the hills.

It is freezing during the night, as our floor heater doesn't work in our double room B. We "bang" down the upper bunk and wrestle the blanket off. The cold wakes us up to see what happens at Pittsburgh. We leave at 2:35am, an hour late, and are scheduled to board 48 more soldiers. After a few miles we notice that we are not following the route of the NATIONAL LIMITED. Rather, we find ourselves up at Conway Yard, slowly moving along the west side instead of the east side along the main line to Chicago. After many stops and starts and hand-thrown switches, we're back on the main line, but not for long. At Rochester, 26 miles from Pittsburgh, the train turns and crosses the Beaver River, goes under the stone arch bridge of the P&LE, and then proceeds along the north bank of the Ohio River. Our route is a detour via East Liverpool to Mingo Junction, where we join the St. Louis line west of Steubenville. An extra 45 miles of tracks we've never ridden.

(Left:) Sign at New York's Penn Station marked the furlough train. (Right:) Typical coach scene on the train. All photos by the author.

In the morning there are 51 more soldiers waiting in the old Amtrak station at Columbus, Ohio. Leaving time is 8:27, or 2hrs, 17mins late. Now we have 428 passengers. Here the train veers off the ex-Pennsy (Conrail) line to St. Louis and heads up the ex-Pennsy line to Logansport via Union City. This is the route of the old FT. HAYES #81, the day train to Chicago, the night train being the OHIOAN #85. This track is the stretch that most railfans have come along to ride--the 104 miles from Columbus to Union City.

We much an Am-muffin and look out the back window of the slumbercoach. An icicle has formed a streak down the glass. The B&O's CINCINNATIAN line is crossed at East Piqua at 9:54am. We then rock over the Miami River, passing the site of the Piqua station a couple of minutes later. Union City comes at 10:35am (the FT. HAYES was formerly due out of here at 10:07am). Here we encounter the Big Four Route, ex-NYC main line for the dash to Indianapolis. In the old days, the NYC's SOUTHWESTERN LIMITED would have just flashed by, and we follow in her fanciful wake.

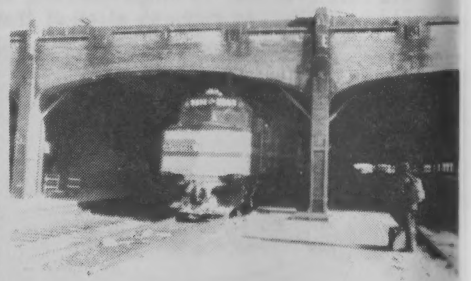
Muncie, Indiana appears at 11:07 EST. Comments are heard: "Yes, this is where the 765 stopped for water." "Yeah, and there's the grocery store where we got supplies." These are references to the "Independence Limited International" trip last July behind NKP steam. That special train turned south at this point, but we continue west thru Anderson at 11:28am. However, our troop train grinds to a halt at Ingles, Indiana, about 12 miles from Anderson. It's 11:40am and here we sit. It

happens that there is a broken rail on the eastbound main, so a freight train is using our track. The trouble is, he has some sticking brake shoes and is delayed. So are we.

We start up finally, after the freight in question roars past. It is now 12:47 pm and we have cooled our heels for over an hour. Our special (known as train 31A) clunks into Indianapolis at 1:20pm EST.

At this point some of the railfans depart, leaving six of us to ride the rest of the way. An electrician gets on here and manages to nurse the heat into a functional mode, restoring room warmth. The ice then melts off the window. And 62 soldiers clamber up on board. Also, another passenger ascends and is escorted by Ron Goldfeder into room #1 of the slumbercoach. This is none other than the venerable rail traveler E. M. Frimbo himself. We salute his presence with a 45 degree bow. He looks up and remarks in his curmudgeonly way, "Oh, I was afraid you'd be along on this trip!" But there is the slightest flicker of a smile and a quick glimmer in the eye, and we know everything is alright. The only trackage he needs to ride this trip is the last segment into "Fort Lenny."

Departure is at 1:50pm, almost 3 hours late, and we breeze over the Monon to Greencastle at 2:32pm EST. At 3pm Central Time we are at Effingham, Illinois, and pick up three more soldiers. These are the last, and the final head count is 476 passengers.



(Left:) Amtrak's Miriam Rudder serves soldiers at one of the Amcafes. (Right:) The train, with snow-spattered pilot, peeks out of the trainshed at Indianapolis.

The word is that no more liquor is to be sold west of here, and no more beer sales after St. Louis. That rule, according to the sergeants on board is to keep the troops in good shape when they get off at the Fort. No problem. And food has been easy to get, as the long lines that were experienced on the eastbound trip don't happen this time. Most items sell out, but there are plenty of hot dogs and tacos. We think the 35¢ price is quite good, and have several during the trip. Seafood quiche is available, but it doesn't sell, nor do the potato knishes.

As we click and flick down the ex-Pennsy main line thru Illinois, we pass thru the train and--ooops! Here's Dr. Johnny Fever from WKRP in Cincinnati. But no, it turns out to be Larry H. E. Miller, Assistant Transportation Superintendant of Amtrak's St. Louis Division. He's a look-alike to actor Howard Hesseman, but doesn't know of the TV star. We assure Larry that the comparison is a compliment.

E. M. Frimbo tells us that he has just completed a tour on the HOOSIER STATE after training in from New York. Next February he's going to India to ride five different gauges and run behind steam power. Way to go! He confides that he has gotten only 68,000 miles last year. When we mention that we are close behind at 60,000, he quickly adds that the total doesn't count the 17,000 European miles!

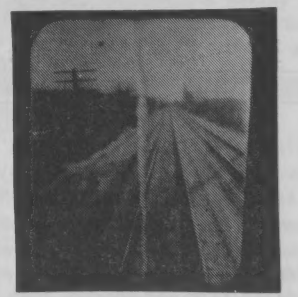
Approaching St. Louis, we do not, for some reason, go directly over Eads bridge, but turn north over the TRRA and snake up to Merchants bridge, then down again the other side of the Mississippi. The special arrives at the Gateway City's Am-stop at 4:59pm, two hours late. We avail ourselves of the time at the station to cancel

our hotel reservations for later tonight (the reason for which will be explained shortly).

At 5:34 the Am-troop train whistles off for the last leg of the trip. We are now on the Burlington Northern, also known as the Frisco, and are leaving just ahead of the old TEXAS SPECIAL's time of 5:40pm. The track is in excellent shape and we speed right along. Our train passes the turreted station at Rolla by 8:17 pm. We stop at Newburg, 119.2 miles out, at 8:30. Crews are changed in the darkness and some Army people get on. A resident peers from his window across the street at this passenger train apparition.

We leave the Springfield line at Bundy Junction, 2.4 miles later, to turn southwest. Here begins 19.1 miles of U.S. Government Railway into the base. Top speed is 30mph. It's 8:42pm. An announcement comes over the P.A.: "You will stay in your seats. Do not start getting ready yet. We have another hour to go. When we do get ready, Fourth Brigade will off-load first."

A questionnaire is passed out, asking everyone to rate the train and service. It reads: "How would you rate the AMTRAK service: Poor, Fair, Good, Outstanding; If poor, why? If outstanding, why? If you made this trip again would you travel by: AMTRAK, Airline, Bus; Did you experience excessive delays in getting to your destination? Yes, No, Explain...; Did you have problems with lost or misplaces luggage? What suggestions do you have for future improvements of train service from Fort Leonard Wood?" We understand that 80% of the responses were favorable.



(Left:) One passenger brought along a portable TV. (Right:) Near Piqua, Ohio, Pete noticed an icicle down the rear window of the slumbercoach.

Later, an Amtrak official tells the soldiers they were a very good group and wishes them well in their Army career. We arrive at Fort Leonard Wood at 9:43pm, a mere 38 minutes behind time, mainly due to excess padding in the Frisco schedule.

We step off the rear of the train and move forward in the night. Bright lights have been set up ahead, and shadowy figures are moving to and fro. A roar fills the air from the generator providing the temporary lighting; another roar from the F40s; orders being barked, vehicles revving up--it's a chaotic scene. Parked opposite the train are funny-looking buses--they are actually semi-troop carriers, the passenger compartments fashioned from truck-trailer bodies. The troops call them "cattle cars". Finally, headlights recede, the hubbub dies down, and the F40s cut off the train and run around on the passing track.

Our original plan had been for us railfan types to wander off towards the Post bus station and catch a Greyhound or an Eagle back to St. Louis. But Mr. Elliot has permitted us true-blue railfans to deadhead back with the train! A fare of $8 was quoted, and we had all purchased tickets back in town. It was further revealed that altho our train would arrive at 3am or so, it would be hooked onto #300, the STATE HOUSE, and deadhead up to Chicago. Well, it so happened that both Frimbo and I were headed that way. Arrangements were concluded to permit us to stay in the slumbercoach--fast asleep--in our "set-out sleeper"--when we got to St. Louis! What convenience!

Leaving time from Fort Leonard Wood was 11:01pm--a 1 hr, 18 min stay. The slee-

per was packed and jammed with Frisco officials, trainmen, hangers on, etc. They turned in for a couple of hours. We wafted off to dreamland while still on the U.S. Government Railway, then sped thru the night.

A banging on the door awoke us, and we were in the big city. Did we have to vacate after all? No, it was just a Frisco man thinking we were to get off here. As the car was shunted around later, we remained half-awake and heard some employees re-enter the car. "Hey, Joe, I told you we should come back. Let's take those pillows, they're the big, nice ones. Just make sure they don't say 'NRPC' on them." They were railroad employee thieves, a big problem for Amtrak these days (in fact, one of the new Superliner Sightseer lounge cars was vandalized before it even went on its maiden run. TV sets were ripped out, along with the electric piano). We were too sleepy to make accusations, but did manage to stick our head out of the door and scare them, as they thought the car was unoccupied.

They left, presumably without the pillows, and we returned to sleep until... Crash! Number 300 coupled up to us. Hours later we woke up near Pontiac, Illinois, zipping along at about 70mph. We met Mr. M. C. Wikman, Diesel Mechanical and Operations man from Amtrak's Chicago facilities. He told us stories of the many frustrations Amtrak has to go thru all the time in getting equipment over the road, maintenance problems with the new electrical stuff, slipshod work done from time to time (our electrical slumbercoach was proof of that).

E. M. Frimbo and I move forward into the regular part of the STATE HOUSE to get coffee and tea and discuss our adventures on the Furlough Train to Missouri. Remarks Frimbo: "It was a glorious trip--especially on the way back. I didn't have to do a thing!"

IN BOSTON "T" STANDS FOR TOUGH TIMES

by Peter Roehm

It has been a bad season for Boston's transit system. The money ran out in November and on the 18th the Governor, for the second year in a row, declared an emergency and assumed control of the system. Had he not, and it closed down coincident with Boston's first snowfall of two to eight inches of wet slush, there would have been a hemorrhaging of the traffic system such as even the most creative of Hollywood's comedy writers could never have imagined.

The MBTA had overspent its budget by millions, and with this very clear in mind, the controller of the T's checkbook, the independent Advisory Board, composed of representatives of the cities and towns within the MBTA District, said "no." The communities were still reeling from the voter-approved referendum two weeks before that put a 2½% of fair market value limit on property taxes, and this coupled with an earlier state-mandated 4% cap on 1980 spending over 1979 was hurting all over.

Not surprisingly, however, the state refused to play by its own rules and was spending at a rate of 15% over the previous year, and this did not sit comfortably either. But the Advisory Board members just could not see coming up with the extra money for $18,000 telephone operators, $29,000 bus cleaners, and $35,000 bus drivers when they couldn't even afford their own policemen, firemen and school teachers any longer. The Carmen's Union was a staunch supporter of the Governor in the last election, and he was remaining true to their seemingly insatiable appetite. Push was now coming to shove.

On Nov 20 the Advisory Board asked to have the Governor's takeover and spending rules declared illegal. After some procrastination at two court levels, the full Supreme Judicial Court finally declared on Nov 28 that the takeover was illegal, and gave the Governor and the Legislature one week to seek legal appropriations or close the system down. Needed was $41 million--it would cost three-fourth of that to close it. Meanwhile, 300,000 anxious commuters and a very nervous downtown merchant's community, in the midst of a lackluster Christmas buying season, were beginning to see red and it wasn't from a subway signal either.

The Legislature was called back into special session continually and nothing happened. The funding formula had heretofore been 50-50 between state and the District, but the Advisory Board was hoping for 100% state. The House kept its stance at 50-50 and the Senate wanted the 100%. No one would give in. Came midweek and the Boston & Maine Railroad issued notices to its 1000-commuter service-related job holders that effective at midnight Wednesday, Dec 3 the B&M service would halt and all commuter-related jobs would be abolished. It was claimed, in error, that the railroad needed two days to secure its equipment. Scrambling about saved the system until Friday night, so that it and the transit properties would go out together.

As Friday midnight approached, there was no progress being made anywhere, and the system was shut down by court order as advertised. Boston was not crowded on what should have been a major shopping weekend--everyone went to the suburban malls instead. The downtown merchants claimed that they lost $6 million that day. The legislature was still dilly-dallying along, altho a bill had been introduced with a 75-25 split. Meanwhile, tempers were raging and MBTA Chairman (of sorts) Barry Locke lashed out on a radio interview that the whole problem with the MBTA could be traced to Chelsea Mayor Joel Pressman. Pressman was listening to the radio at the time, heard that, and made a bee-line for the State House. He cornered Locke and called him flat out a liar. It was cold outside, but the heat inside the State House could have kept the city warm for the rest of the winter. Everyone was mad--everyone!

Finally, somehow, a settlement was reached, and at 1:45am Sunday the seventh Governor King signed the bill and within hours the system was running. But push had become shove had become kick: No sooner had the bill been signed than announcements were out whereby eleven bus routes were permanently cancelled immediately, and cutbacks in service were announced for 32 other routes plus commuter rail cuts and warnings that up to 20% of the entire Boston transit system might go. The Advisory Board screamed foul--they had thought that passing the bill meant retaining the service as it had been thru the balance of the year.

There were some management rights provisions in the new bill that had been forced in over much reluctance from labor-indebted Governor King. They weren't as strong as they should have been, but were more so than had the Governor had his way. The Governor also got a seat on the Advisory Board equal in weight to that of the City of Boston and which, in effect, dilutes the strength of the District communities in their control of the MBTA's spending habits. In total, there was more winning than losing, but it could have gone better if the knee-jerk Legislature and Administration had been willing to face reality--something few politicians ever admit exists never mind wanting to face.

What happened to commuter rail in all of this? Well, the proposal from last summer to remove the commuter rail system from the MBTA and re-establish it as a separate agency under the state DOT died--the House killed it 100 to 45, as it would have cost money. The Senate accepted the proposal and left it in conference committee, but will reintroduce it in the 1981 legislature. The odds for it passing are more positive than negative.

In the meanwhile, the commute rail department, now Railroad Operations, has been told to cut $4 million from its $50 million-plus budget and to this end there will be January cuts in routes and frequencies. All service to Woburn will be eliminated. Most of the present Woburn trains that also serve Wedgemere and Winchester will continue to do so, but will not run the Woburn branch. Sometime in 1981 a new Mishawum station at a point near Route 128 and on the New Hampshire Division will open

(continued on page 22)

ON THE TRAIL OF THE ELUSIVE SIGHTSEER LOUNGE CAR

The COAST STARLIGHT Goes Superliner

By Sylvia Blishak and Jim Russell

The first Superliner-equipped COAST STARLIGHT reaches San Jose on Jan 15. Photo by Gene Hines. At far left of photo is Caltrans/SP commute train.

Jan 11, 1981 - San Jose Amtrak station, 7:15pm:

We're waiting for a last look at the COAST STARLIGHT with conventional equipment, since in a few days Superliner equipment will be phased in on this route.

The northbound train pulls in at 7:20, 19 minutes late, and she's a sorry sight. There are four dome cars in the consist, but one is completely dark. There are two dining cars, one overcrowded, the other dark and deserted, bringing up the rear. One coach has paint scraped off the side as if it had been in an accident; another clangs along on a flat wheel. Columns of steam curl up from under the cars during their brief stop in San Jose.

Old girl, you've worked too long and too hard, and it shows! Can you hold together for a few more days?

★ ★ ★

Jan 14, Menlo Park:

The phone rings. A voice says, "This is Jim Russell of RTN. Had you heard that the first Superliner COAST STARLIGHT is due to run northbound on the fifteenth?"

I answer that I had, and planned to witness the event at the San Jose station. Jim has heard that a Sightseer lounge car will be part of the consist, and asks if I'd be willing to take some photos of the interior. I agree, and decide it would be worth riding between San Jose and Oakland <u>if</u> there is one of these elusive cars aboard.

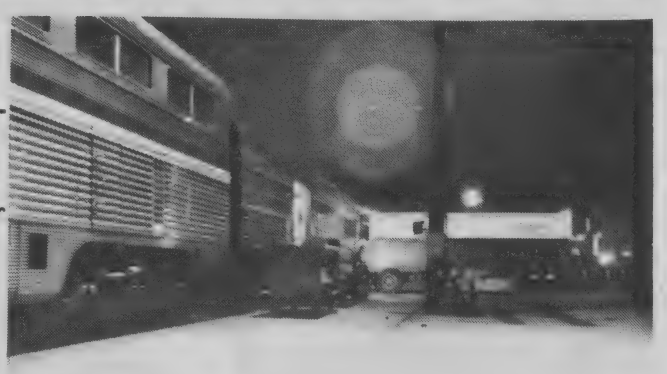
I phone Amtrak and speak with an agent named Danny who confirms reservations for us between San Jose and Oakland. "It will be the STARLIGHT's first Superliner" he says.

"I know," I reply. "I'm going to write an article about the Sightseer lounge car for Rail Travel News."

"Hey, that's my favorite magazine!" Danny replies. "But, sorry, there <u>won't</u> be a Sightseer lounge on the train tomorrow!"

We decide to go to the station anyhow--he could be wrong!

(Right:) The first Superliner-equipped STARLIGHT gets its load of mail at Oakland on Jan 15. (Bottom:) The first eastbound run of a Sightseer lounge car on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, leaving Oakland on Jan 9. First operation of the car (#33002) was from Chicago on Jan 6. RTN photos.



Jan 15, San Jose Amtrak station, 7:06pm:

We're waiting at the same spot on the platform. We hear a melodious, five-chime horn, and two strobe lights on the point illuminate raindrops that are starting to fall. Two GM engines, #260 and #243, rumble towards us, pulling a shiny new train with green running lights on the side of each car--only five minutes late. The Superliner comes to a halt with a sustained howl of brakes (we noticed this characteristic on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR as well, altho the Superliner equipment is quiet-running otherwise). Unfortunately, Danny was right--there is no Sightseer lounge. We elect, therefore, <u>not</u> to ride to Oakland, since we've already experienced a Superliner ride on the ZEPHYR and we know it <u>is</u> super!

The green lights all turn amber as the train stops. We stand outside the rear sleeper and chat with Trainmaster Elie Brown, who wears a brown suit and silver Superliner badge (which he gives to us when he discovers we're railfans). He explains that he works for Southern Pacific on assignment to Amtrak. He is quite excited about the new Superliners, and says there have been press and TV cameras at most station stops. (No TV cameras here--just two other railfans making notes of the consist!) "All the kids aboard today have been given engineer's hats to wear, and the passengers and crew are both delighted with the new train," he continues.

"But where is the Sightseer lounge we heard was going to be on the train?" we ask. Mr. Brown confers with an Amtrak official aboard the train, who predicts it will be February before we'll see these cars on the STARLIGHT.

"I've heard they're running two or three of them on the ZEPHYR," the official says, "and I saw one is Las Vegas yesterday."

"On the DESERT WIND?" we ask.

"No, it was just on display--but it sure looked nice!"

The call of "All aboard" is sounded, and the lights turn green again as the train that arrived so noisily glides away like a silver ghost.

Jan 25, Martinez:

Jim Russell here, waiting with a few others for the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, which is an hour late, having hit a riderless motorcycle near Loomis, north of Sacramento. It's carrying one of the three Sightseer lounge cars assigned to the ZEPHYR--car 33015. At 3:10 it pulls in with a shrill screech of brakes. We board and head quickly for the new lounge-cafe.

The 10-car train is jammed with passengers and many of them are listening to the Superbowl game on portable radios. We enter the lounge car and are immediately overtaken by the excitement and elegance of its interior. I am at once reminded of

(continued on page 22)

(Above left:) Amtrak stripes on lounge exterior jog upwards to run thru window line of car. (Upper and lower right:) Fisheye and normal lens view of interior of Sightseer car 33015 on upper level. Narrow shelf below lower windows holds drinks. Big windows give feeling of openness and spaciousness while variety of seating arrangements lends an informal quality to the lounge. (Below left:) The piano lounge area on car's lower level. View is to front of car; behind camera are tables for four, and snack counter at rear of car.

page 14 Photos by RTN.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE SILVER METEOR will be equipped with electrified Heritage Fleet cars on Feb 16 in both directions, Amtrak said, and the third consist would be so equipped shortly thereafter. Amtrak held Family Days in Miami the weekend of Jan 24-25, to which an approximate total of 30,000 people came. Amtrak had two LRC locomotives and eight cars to take visitors on short rides. On Jan 20 there was a Family Day at Orlando FL, with Heritage Fleet and Superliner cars on display. Information given out there said that the SILVER STAR would get the electrified cars by August. Family Days were also held at Jacksonville FL Jan 17-18, and the LRC was there as well as at Miami, but not at Orlando. The Florida trains have gone back to their off-season consists, with the SILVER STAR now running 13 cars. The SILVER METEOR is a little below the 18-car limit in the combined train north of Jacksonville.....

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THE AMTRAK BOARD of Directors was holding its January meeting in Coronado CA, near San Diego, on Jan 28. Commitment Approval Requests to be voted on included facility and right-of-way improvements on the Harrisburg line, Northeast Corridor and Springfield line; acquisition of maintenance of way equipment; and extension of the 480-volt standby system for New York's Sunnyside Yard. Approval of the Fiscal Year 1981 capital budget was also on the agenda.....

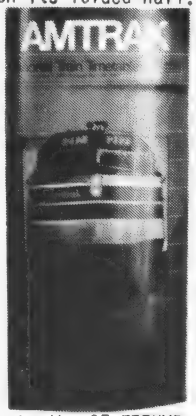
NOVEMBER RIDERSHIP FIGURES for Amtrak are not out yet, but an Amtrak spokesman said that November's systemwide ridership was down 2.3% from Nov 1979. This was because the Northeast Corridor's patronage was down 10.3%; every other category was up--short distance was up 10.6%, long distance was up 4.2%. The Corridor has been suffering ridership losses because of the construction work going on there that causes delays to trains.....

THE COAST STARLIGHT is in the process of being re-equipped with Superliner cars, and the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR has gotten the first three Superliner Sightseer lounges to be delivered to Amtrak (see also the story on pages 12-14). Sightseer cars nos. 33002, 33007 and 33015 were the first delivered, as recorded last issue. The first car ran on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, from Chicago on Jan 6. (See also Cars and Consists department.) The first Superliner consist of the STARLIGHT ran from Los Angeles on Jan 15, and the second from there on Jan 18. The last northbound run of conventional equipment on the train was to be from L.A. on Jan 25, with the final conventional run originating in Seattle on Jan 27. But the SFZ is the only Superliner train with lounges, and the others use a coach for temporary lounge space until more Sightseer cars are available. A source at Pullman-Standard said (as of Jan 1) that the company's projected delivery of the cars was seven lounges by Jan 31, plus six more sleepers and three diners; in February, six lounges, six sleepers and three diners; and in March, four lounges, six sleepers and three diners. These projections probably won't be met, however.....

THE PANAMA LIMITED gets its name changed to the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS on Feb 1. A special inaugural ceremony for the change is to take place on Feb 3, Amtrak said. The reason for the name change is a request by the mayor of New Orleans. Amtrak originally changed the name back in 1971 after the disastrous accident on the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS when the train hit a tanker truck at a crossing.....

CHICAGO UNION STATION will be the scene of a special ceremony Feb 10 when the city's mayor, Jane Byrne, cuts a ribbon to symbolically open the main waiting room of the station following completion of its refurbishing. The skylight of the big room was painted black in World War II for blackout purposes, and now the clear glass is again exposed, flooding the area with light.....

AMTRAK'S SYSTEMWIDE TIMETABLE dated Feb 1-Apr 25 was available well in advance of its effective date. The new timetable, pictured at right, has a bright orange-red cover with a full-color painting of Amtrak F40 engine #212 on its folded half. There aren't any radical schedule changes in it. Amtrak notes faster schedules on the EMBASSY, CONGRESSIONAL, MOUNT VERNON, NIAGARA RAINBOW, PALMETTO, SHENANDOAH, LAKE SHORE LIMITED, PENNSYLVANIAN, and PRAIRIE MARKSMAN. The WASHINGTON IRVING was extended to Schenectady NY and another round trip added between Albany and Schenectady. Schedules of the Florida trains have been revised, with most northbound departure times now earlier. The COLONIAL now stops at BWI Airport in both directions. In anticipation of service coming in the near future to Michigan City, Indiana, and to maintain a connection between the LAKE CITIES and the LAKE SHORE, Amtrak made some schedule adjustments in Michigan train times. Amtrak lists Superliner service on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED and COAST STARLIGHT. PIONEER and DESERT WIND schedules show times to and from Chicago (these are SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR times, of course). The DESERT WIND schedule emphasizes a thru Superliner coach Chicago-L.A. Amtrak states that coming this spring is thru Superliner coach service via the SF ZEPHYR and PIONEER, Chicago-Denver-Seattle. This timetable is printed in an edition of 500,000--the same as the Oct 26 folder that it replaces.....



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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, Feb issue, carries a beautiful 2-page Amtrak ad. The ad consists of a big color photo of a moody seascape, with part of a train window frame on the left. At the upper left is the caption: "Point Arguello, California, 4:35pm as seen from Amtrak's train the Coast Starlight." At the lower right is this: "This time why not see America at see level?" followed by an Amtrak logo and the slogan "America's Getting into Training".....

THE SUNSET LIMITED will be the next train to be equipped with Superliner cars. The tentative schedule, as we go to press, calls for the first Superliner set to leave Los Angeles on Feb 20, with another leaving on Feb 22 and Feb 27. Leaving New Orleans, the first westbound Superliner runs are to be Feb 23, 25 and Mar 2. The last runs of conventional equipment on the train are at this time set for Feb 24 from L.A. and Feb 20 or 27 from New Orleans.....

AMTRAK'S 1981 CALENDAR, shown at the right, features a salute to the 200th birthday of the city of Los Angeles. Pictured in the full-color Gil Reid painting is the L.A. station with a montage of Superliner and Amfleet trains, and buses of Greyhound, Trailways and the L.S. Rapid Transit District. Below this scene is pictured the Spanish-American neighborhood just across the street from the station. The calendar is available for $5 postpaid from: Amtrak Calendar, PO Box 311, Addison IL 60101.....

NEW YORKER MAGAZINE for Dec 29 carried another train-ride story by Berton Roueche, who wrote the rave review of cross-country Amtrak travel in the Sep 15 issue of that magazine (see RTN #212). This one, entitled "Rapido", is about train travel in Italy.....

FIRST RAIL FAIR of its magnitude held in the U.S. since 1949 is the way the promoters of the grand opening of the California State Railroad Museum are advertising the May 2-10 event in Sacramento. It is expected that among the steam locomotives on hand will be the 8444 and Challenger, the 4449, the Best Friend of Charleston, and the Tom Thumb. There may be excursions behind the 8444. RTN has learned that 4449 excursions may be out because of insurance problems raised by the SP. The Museum says there will be 21 pieces of rolling stock in the museum itself, besides the visiting locos. Amtrak will participate in the event also, celebrating its tenth anniversary. There will be equipment on hand from the Smithsonian Institute and from Canada and Great Britain. The museum promises continuous entertainment, with daily pageant performances. Admission fee to the grand opening is $7. Contact the Rail Fair Committee, 930 Front St, Old Sacramento CA 95814. Phone (916) 447-7767. Hotel reservations are now being taken by: Joan Jackson, Director of Housing, Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau, 1100 14th St, Sacramento CA 94814. Phone (916) 449-5291. The museum is in Old Sacramento, a stone's throw from the Amtrak station.....

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AMTRAK'S EMERGING CORRIDORS report is due to be presented to Congress Feb 15.....

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR westbound derailed four cars on Jan 27 in the Denver yard. Cars remained upright, and there were no injuries.....

THE COAST STARLIGHT, train 14, derailed its first two locomotives at 14th Street in Portland on Jan 26. Passengers were bused on to Seattle and the consist (a conventional consist) was turned to become train 11 of Jan 27, the last day of operation of conventional cars on the train.....

SANTA FE FREIGHT derailment occurred just west of the Kansas City station at 11:05pm Jan 18, happening as two Santa Fe trains were passing and one derailed, involving tank cars, under Interstate 35. One tank car burned for at least two days. The SOUTHWEST LIMITED was detoured during that time, with 1 to 1½ hours delay to each train. Nos. 3 and 4 detoured via the K.C. Terminal north freight route, backing into and out of the station and around the city via Rock Creek Junction east of K.C. The K.C.-St. Louis service was not affected, and trains were being serviced via the north freight route also.....

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THE PANAMA LIMITED in both directions made a 100-mile detour, delaying it two hours, on Jan 22 after an ICG freight derailment at Fulton KY.....

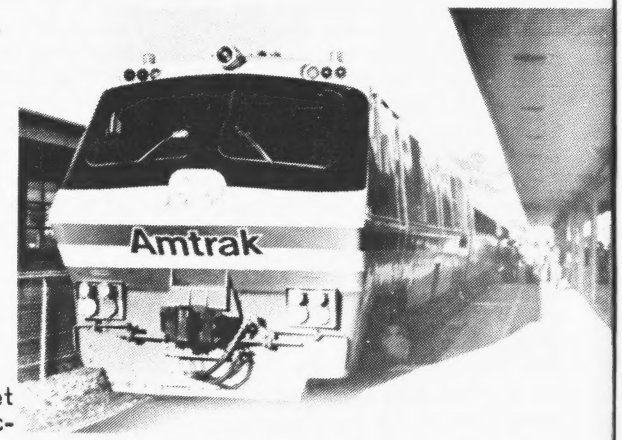
AN AMTRAK TURBOLINER hit a truck at Niles MI on Jan 22, with no injuries.....

THAT MOPAC VIP express that caused the INTER-AMERICAN to be sidetracked and delayed 31 minutes on Dec 30 near Arcadia MO (reported last issue) was the source of great interest in the press. We received more news clippings of that story than any other single happening. The 14-car special train that got the right-of-way was carrying MoPac and UP executives and some bankers to the Sugar Bowl game in New Orleans. The train was hosted by UP Chairman and Mrs. James H. Evans, and was scheduled to leave Omaha at noon Dec 29, running via Kansas City, St. Louis, Little Rock (with 3-hour layover) and on to New Orleans, due to arrive early on Dec 31. On the return trip, departure was 5pm Jan 1 with an overnight run to Memphis (via Little Rock, where the train was terminated and equipment deadheaded back to Omaha. President Gessner of the MoPac was also aboard. An interesting sidelight was that departure from Omaha was delayed an hour because passengers flying there were diverted by fog to Lincoln airport. Consist of the train is given on page 21. The engines, noted at Falls City NE on Dec 29, were MP 3318, and UP 3791 & 3790, all SD40-2 units. Amtrak said it would not sue the railroad over the incident, since the newspapers had embarrassed it enough already. An Amtrak spokesman said that the INTER-AMERICAN arrived about an hour early in Chicago each day for about a week after the sidetracking incident.....

PRICE OF GASOLINE is expected to reach $1.50 per gallon by year-end. However, reports from Washington and Chicago are that it has already hit that figure in late

January. Amtrak ridership should continue to climb. President Reagan was expected to de-control domestic crude oil prices on Jan 28, paving the way for further possible gasoline price hikes.....

AMTRAK RELEASED THIS photo of its LRC trains this month. The train pictured is the northbound BEACON HILL at Providence, Rhode Island. Amtrak noted that the train has been operating with "near-anonymity", but that when optimum safe speeds are determined, the train is expected to go into regular, designated service and to be listed in Amtrak timetables "this spring"...



THE SILVER METEOR, as noted elsewhere, will get Heritage Fleet cars starting in February. What will happen to the SILVER STAR? Amtrak said it will later get "new cars now under construction" by the Budd Company....

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MARDI GRAS FUN Trains will be run by Amtrak to New Orleans from Chicago and the West Coast for the sixth year. A 7-day trip leaves L.A. Feb 26 and a 6-day excursion starts from Chicago Feb 27. Details on the package tours from your travel agent or Amtrak.....

OHIO RAIL TRANSPORTATION Authority announced Jan 9 that it has awarded a contract for $1,199,085 to a Cleveland firm, Dalton, Dalton & Newport for preliminary engineering work for a high-speed test track. A 20-mile test track and research facility, to be located between Warren and Ashtabula OH, will test existing high-speed passenger trains from France, England, Japan, Germany and other countries under Ohio conditions, to enable planners to select an advanced technology for the state's planned high-speed network linking its major cities. In other news, ORTA said this month that Thomas Pulsifer of Xenia OH and David Weir of Columbus, both members of the board of ORTA, have been appointed by Gov. James Rhodes to the board of the High Speed Rail Interstate Compact. Other state members of the compact are Michigan, Illinois and Pennsylvania. Mr. Pulsifer has been chairman of ORTA's board for the past two years, while Mr. Weir is director of Ohio's DOT.....

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RENO FUN TRAIN is now (after Jan 28) the only Amtrak train running dome cars. The first departure of the seasonal train, on Jan 23, saw two domes in the consist. Other departure dates of the train from Oakland to Reno are Jan 30, Feb 6, 20 & 27, Mar 6, 13, 20, & 27, and Apr 3, 10, 17 & 24. Departures are Friday at 6:30pm, with return departure from Reno NV on the following Sunday at 11am. Stops are made at Richmond, Martinez and Sacramento. Tickets include a package hotel deal and run $125 per person double occupancy, $160 single, $115 triple occupancy.....

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE called "Express" is being distributed on Amtrak trains in the Northeast Corridor. Circulation will be later extended to trains thruout the system, Amtrak said. The first issue was expected to reprint the Berton Roueche article from the Sep 15, 1980 New Yorker magazine. East-West Network Inc. is publishing the on-board magazine for Amtrak.....

"A NEW TYPE" of dinette-lounge car goes on the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS Feb 1, Amtrak announced. It's an Amtrak dinette-lounge car with a New Orleans decor theme. A lounge section is at one end and a dining area at the other. A new regional menu is being introduced, with such dishes as Crepes Bayou and Chicken Louisiana at dinner and Omelette Louisiana at breakfast. A new drink offered is Cafe Mardi Gras--a Creole version of Irish coffee, with lacings of vodka and rum instead of whisky....

CASCADE TRAILWAYS SERVICE will be inaugurated Feb 1 between East Olympia and Olympia WA to connect with the MOUNT RAINIER and the PIONEER. Amtrak and Trailways jointly announced the service Jan 20. For this intermodal event, Alan Boyd of Amtrak and James L. Kerrigan, chairman and chief executive officer of Trailways will be on hand for an inaugural ceremony on Jan 31. Buses leave East Olympia at 9:40am, 11:40am and 7:15pm, and depart the Trailways Terminal in Olympia at 8:50am, 10:50am, and 6:20pm for a 35-minute, $1.25 trip.....

PRESIDENT CARTER'S DEPARTMENT of Transportation was one of the best yet (despite the attempt to cut Amtrak in 1979). Goldschmidt was a highly knowledgeable transportation man who favored good public transit. Sorely missed will be Joan Claybrook who tried to keep Detroit on its toes. She will probably be replaced by Raymond Peck, a coal association official who will take an opposite viewpoint.....

EMPIRE STATE PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION, a newly-formed organization of users of rail, bus and other public transportation, had its organizational meeting in Utica NY on Jan 24 and 25. ESPA's dues are $7.50 for individuals, $12 for families. The address is PO Box 92, East Northport NY 11731.....

THE UTAH ASSOCIATION or Railroad Passengers held an organizational meeting in Salt Lake City in November. UtahARP will be affiliated with NARP. New membership fee is $5, basic membership fee is $10, family $15. The address is: 630 North, 80 West #4, Logan UT 84321. The group has proposed that it include Idaho, Colorado, Nevada and Wyoming and be known as the Intermountain States ARP.....

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers, Region XII, will hold its annual meeting Feb 28 10:00am at the New Otani Hotel in Los Angeles, 120 S. Los Angeles St. NARP president Jack Martin will speak. Registration is $3, or $15 including lunch. Contact (N. Cal.) Bob Glover, 415-824-4819 or (S. Cal.) Ed Von Nordeck 714-684-7458.

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AMTRAK'S A FAILURE, says UCLA economist George W. Hilton, who's been telling people that probably since before Amtrak ever got started. His latest diatribe appeared in the Houston Chronicle on Jan 4. His first sentence was: "Amtrak is a failure." The headline over the article was: "Amtrak a failure; not fast enough, not cost-competitive." Hilton says "The railroad passenger train has been declining since 1920..." Lord! If it's taken 61 years to decline this far (all the way to the Superliner Sightseer lounge car!), it'll take about another 200 years to decline completely. Actually, it's George Hilton who's a failure--he's failed to convince us after so many tries, and his arguments seem weaker by the year.....

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR substituted an Amcafe and a Heritage Fleet 10/6 sleeper for part of its Superliner equipment due to the Jan 27 derailment in Denver (see p. 17). The consist of train 6 at Oakland on Jan 29 was to be: cars 1270 baggage, 20035 Amcafe, 2941 sleeper, Hi-level step-down coach-dorm 39931, Superliners coach-baggage 31038, diner 38012, coaches 34095 & 34101.....

AMTRAK TRAIN 404 arrived at Springfield MA with RDC #27, the sole still-running ROGER WILLIAMS cab unit on Jan 6. This single unit then turned on the B&M Y. This may have been a first for #27 to operate as a single unit.....

THE TOM SNYDER TV show on Jan 21 had Lucille Ball and daughter Lucy Arnaz telling of a Superliner misadventure. The two Lucys never left L.A. when they found they'd been sold two economy rooms upstairs instead of a large, deluxe bedroom. They walked right off the train.....

THE AUTO-TRAIN is now on a 5-day a week schedule, skipping Tues and Wed. They are running half-length trains powered by one U-36 and one Amtrak E8 engine. The trains are said to be running on schedule--recent full-size trains were usually quite off-schedule. Sample train makeups: Jan 24: 11 psgr cars, 1 heater car, 13 auto carriers, caboose; Jan 25: 13 psgr cars, 1 heater car, 9 auto carriers, and a caboose.....

News in this issue is updated thru Jan 29, 1981.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Of all the tentative recommendations being made by task forces for the incoming Reagan administration, none is more disconcerting than the proposals to cut back drastically on federal support for transportation--particularly urban mass transit and rails. ...the thrust of the report is unhappily clear: Reverse the direction of the last decade or so in which the federal government has finally been recognizing the overwhelming need for less dependence upon the inefficient, costly, gas-guzzling private automobile and more on efficient, affordable bus and rail transit, particularly within major urban areas and in high-density corridors like that stretching along the east coast."

--Baltimore Evening Sun editorial, Jan 5.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"This year, (former Oakland Raiders coach John) Madden shuttled between Sunday assignments on the rails. He spent Thanksgiving in the parlor and dining cars between Chicago and New York. He went from New Orleans to Dallas this week on Amtrak's Sunset Limited."

--Fred Rothenberg in Philadelphia Inquirer, Dec 25, 1980.

(How does he do it?)

CARS & CONSISTS

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Dec 19, 1980: engines 642, 623, 633; cars 1087, 1572, 5433, 5685, dome 9450, 4890, dome 9479, 4533, 8323, dome 9545 "Silver Vision", 4525, 4530, 4470, 3322 "Anthony Wayne", 8096, 2661 "Silver Plain", 2675 "Silver Vale". Same, 2nd section: engines 643, 539; cars 1250, 5664, 5408, 5414, 5422, 8070, 3311, 5691, 5435, 5415. Train 14, San Jose Jan 15 (first Superliner consist on STARLIGHT): engines 260, 243; cars 1238 baggage, 39912 Hi-level coach-dorm, Superliner cars coach baggage 31002, coach 34100, 34002, 34006, 31036 used as lounge, diner 38021, sleeper 32028. Train 11, Los Angeles Jan 25 (last northbound conventional consist): engines 530, 537; cars 1114, 1551, dome 9482, 4525, 4483, 4522, 4893, 4502, 3313, 8096, 2660 "Silver Meadow", 2673 "Silver Boulder".

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, Oakland Jan 8 (first run of Sightseer lounge): engines 321, 310; cars 1211 & 1214 baggage, Hi-level coach dorm 39906, Superliner cars 32002 slpr, 31027 & 31011 coach-baggage, 38005 diner, 33002 lounge-cafe, 34005 & 34059 coach.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Jan 13: engines 289, 526, 253; cars 1262 & 1161 baggage, Hi-level coach-dorm 39908, Superliners 31034 coach-bag, 34079 coach, Hi-level coach 39958, Superliners 38033 diner, 32027 & 32022 slprs, deadhead Hi-level coach 9900 & ATSF business car 54 to Topeka. Train 3, same: engines 220, 524, 233; cars 1243 & 1238 bag, Hi-level coach-dorm 39930, Superliners coach-dorm 31012, 34060 & 34048 coach, Hi-level coach 39944, Superliners 38009 diner, 32011 sleeper. (Actress Shirley Jones and Marty Ingles departed train at Kansas City.)

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, New Orleans Dec 19, 1980: engines SP 8539, Atk 635 & 500; cars 1190, 9950, 9945, 9949, 9900, 4512, 4502, 3360, 8804-8805 twin-unit diner, 2663 "Silver Slope", 2655 "Silver Valley", 2255 "Star Vale", 2261 "Placid Harbor", Atk business car 10,000.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, Chicago Jan 1: engines 342, 346; cars 1610, 2051, 2891, 4005, 4609, 4000, 3101, 8514, 4610, 4612, 4601, 4605, 2437, 1375. (Train left NY 2hrs late, arrived Chicago o.t. E. M. Frimbo aboard, for 20th consecutive year of train riding on New Year's Day.)

*LIBERTY EXPRESS, train 190, New York Dec 31, 1980: engines 764 & 768 (GP-9 Atk switch engines), 913 (AEM-7) (764 & 768 to New Haven, where replaced by F-40 211); cars 1267, 20677, 21023, 21084, 21076, deadheads 21882, 21012, 20013.

*UP-MoPac special for RR officials and friends, Omaha-New Orleans to 1981 Sugar Bowl game, New Orleans Jan 5: engines unknown; power car UP 300; cars UP 5779 bag, UP "Cabarton" slpr, UP 1611 "Sun Slope" slpr, MoPac 2 office car, UP "Omaha" office car, UP "Wyoming" office car, UP 4810, dome UP 9004, office cars UP 103, UP "Arden", UP 102, UP "Snoshone", MoPac 1.

RAIL FANTRIPS

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. To be sure of entry in time, send full info at least 4 weeks before event. Be sure to address letter as follows: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Feb 28: Fourth ERHA/SC Tour of Progress on San Diego's Light Rail Transit Line; bus to cover entire route, visit cars, shops, connect with Amtrak Trains 574 and 583; $8; SSAE to Jim Stewart, 2439 4th St, #4, Santa Monica CA 90405.

Apr 4: Annual ERHA/SC Tour on San Francisco Muni Ry, using historic 1912-vintage car No. One; numerous photo stops; limited capacity; for details, send SSAE to Jim Stewart, 2439 Fourth Street, #4, Santa Monica CA 90405.

EXPRESS ADS

MASTERS OF RAIL TRAVEL--and Amtrak is our specialty. We enjoy seeing that you have the best accommodations available. Call or write us--GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105; (415) 398-2994. Receive your tickets by mail--pay by check or credit card. It's easy--one call does it all

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

TROLLEY TRAILS THROUGH THE WEST, Volumes 1-Yakima, 2-Seattle, 3-Portland, 4-Tacoma/Spokane, 5-Montana/Utah, 6-Western Canada, 7-Northern California, 8-Southern California $4.00 each. Moneyback guarantee.
Wilson Bros. Publications, Box 712rtn, Yakima, WA 98907.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TIMETABLE COLLECTORS welcomes your membership. $14 dues brings two excellent professionally produced publications. Monthly (3rd Saturday) New York meeting, St. John's Church, 31st St & 7th Ave. across the street from Penn Station 10am till noon - all welcome!!
Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Road, Holland PA 18966.

Railroad cloth emblems and uniform buttons. Send $1.00 for a sample of each and list. Joseph Lajoie, Box 3, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

VIA RAIL system folder timetable, colour, 55 pages, plus local folders. Send $1 for postage and handling to: H. Gow, Box 300, Chelsea, Que. J0X 1N0, Canada.

FOR SALE: 30 whole Model Railroader magazines (70's) $4 ppd. 36 Trains magazines (1950's) $5 ppd. Clinton Larson, Box 611, La Crosse, Wis. 54601.

RR ITEMS - Public, employee timetables; Conrail, P.C. Post, Headlight magazines; books; lanterns; Franklin Mint limited edition sterling silver engine silhouettes; miscellaneous; Tri-ang ship collection. For sale, write: Crawford, 123 Lexington Ave, Bayonne NJ 07002.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads: only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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(How does he do it?)

CARS & CONSISTS

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Dec 19, 1980: engines 642, 623, 633; cars 1087, 1572, 5433, 5685, dome 9450, 4890, dome 9479, 4533, 8323, dome 9545 "Silver Vision", 4525, 4530, 4470, 3322 "Anthony Wayne", 8096, 2661 "Silver Plain", 2675 "Silver Vale". Same, 2nd section: engines 643, 539; cars 1250, 5664, 5408, 5414, 5422, 8070, 3311, 5691, 5435, 5415. Train 14, San Jose Jan 15 (first Superliner consist on STARLIGHT): engines 260, 243; cars 1238 baggage, 39912 Hi-level coach-dorm, Superliner cars coach baggage 31002, coach 34100, 34002, 34006, 31036 used as lounge, diner 38021, sleeper 32028. Train 11, Los Angeles Jan 25 (last northbound conventional consist): engines 530, 537; cars 1114, 1551, dome 9482, 4525, 4483, 4522, 4893, 4502, 3313, 8096, 2660 "Silver Meadow", 2673 "Silver Boulder".

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, Oakland Jan 8 (first run of Sightseer lounge): engines 321, 310; cars 1211 & 1214 baggage, Hi-level coach dorm 39906, Superliner cars 32002 slpr, 31027 & 31011 coach-baggage, 38005 diner, 33002 lounge-cafe, 34005 & 34059 coach.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Jan 13: engines 289, 526, 253; cars 1262 & 1161 baggage, Hi-level coach-dorm 39908, Superliners 31034 coach-bag, 34079 coach, Hi-level coach 39958, Superliners 38033 diner, 32027 & 32022 slprs, deadhead Hi-level coach 9900 & ATSF business car 54 to Topeka. Train 3, same: engines 220, 524, 233; cars 1243 & 1238 bag, Hi-level coach-dorm 39930, Superliners coach-dorm 31012, 34060 & 34048 coach, Hi-level coach 39944, Superliners 38009 diner, 32011 sleeper. (Actress Shirley Jones and Marty Ingles departed train at Kansas City.)

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, New Orleans Dec 19, 1980: engines SP 8539, Atk 635 & 500; cars 1190, 9950, 9945, 9949, 9900, 4512, 4502, 3360, 8804-8805 twin-unit diner, 2663 "Silver Slope", 2655 "Silver Valley", 2255 "Star Vale", 2261 "Placid Harbor", Atk business car 10,000.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, Chicago Jan 1: engines 342, 346; cars 1610, 2051, 2891, 4005, 4609, 4000, 3101, 8514, 4610, 4612, 4601, 4605, 2437, 1375. (Train left NY 2hrs late, arrived Chicago o.t. E. M. Frimbo aboard, for 20th consecutive year of train riding on New Year's Day.)

*LIBERTY EXPRESS, train 190, New York Dec 31, 1980: engines 764 & 768 (GP-9 Atk switch engines), 913 (AEM-7) (764 & 768 to New Haven, where replaced by F-40 211); cars 1267, 20677, 21023, 21084, 21076, deadheads 21882, 21012, 20013.

*UP-MoPac special for RR officials and friends, Omaha-New Orleans to 1981 Sugar Bowl game, New Orleans Jan 5: engines unknown; power car UP 300; cars UP 5779 bag, UP "Cabarton" slpr, UP 1611 "Sun Slope" slpr, MoPac 2 office car, UP "Omaha" office car, UP "Wyoming" office car, UP 4810, dome UP 9004, office cars UP 103, UP "Arden", UP 102, UP "Shoshone", MoPac 1.

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SIGHTSEER LOUNGE CAR (cont'd from page 14)

the feeling of spaciousness the old SP dome lounges gave. This car has the same feeling, and in addition it provides a great variety of seating choices plus a downstairs cafe and lounge with electric piano. There's a small bar upstairs, but only the lower level one operates in this "off" season. Is it my imagination, or does this car ride better than the jittery Superliner coaches?

We try out the various seats, the swivel ones and the fixed, and turn on the electric piano below to hear its sound. We find the tables for four in the lower cafe extremely pleasant, beside giant windows reminiscent of the ferry boats that ply the bay we are now viewing. These cars will undoubtedly be extremely popular.

We rush into Oakland, arriving only 11 minutes late on the SFZ's padded schedule. The streets are almost devoid of traffic while thousands of TV sets beam out the Superbowl game still in progress. Next to Superbowl, Superliner is a center of excitement today. The $1,350,000 lounge cars are going to pay off very well for Amtrak and for the American rail traveler.

BOSTON'S TOUGH TIMES (continued from page 11)

and this would have ultimately replaced Woburn in any event. There will also be some changes to New Hampshire Division trains to Lowell as well as changes on the Fitchburg Division. One Framingham train will be dropped, as will one to Stoughton and one to Attleboro. All service at West Gloucester, Silver Hill, Uphams Corner, Morton and Plimptonville will be terminated, and only rush hour service will remain at Prides Crossing, Waverley Square and Belmont. Rentals on two GP-7 locomotives will be terminated, saving $83,000 each; three crews will go, as will one maintenance position in Providence and ticket sales at Route 128, Providence, Sharon and Stoughton.

This is for starters. There could be more cuts that could include all service to Stoughton, all late-night and Sunday trains, and more minimal-use stops such as Hastings and Kendall Green. There was immediate opposition to curtailing the Silver Hill and West Gloucester stations, but patronage just won't support the service. Silver Hill boards about a dozen riders daily, and West Gloucester about nine. It costs $1.50 to stop and accelerate a train at each station (1.5 gallons at $1 per gallon) and 21,000 stops would be saved. Granted that this sounds like petty stuff when the MBTA is talking in the millions and there is some legitimate objection to all of this, but Railroad Operations does not want to curtail anything but they have been told that they must, so they are attempting to cut where vulnerability is the least. In all, 9.8% of the service goes, affecting 1000 riders or about 3% of the total.

But the big crunch is next summer when the equipment problem comes front and center. The GO cars begin to go back in late April at the rate of two per week, and there is no new or rebuilt equipment scheduled until late fall, if then. The RDC rebuild program is behind schedule, and even if it began on Jan 1, the first three cars, per contract, would not be ready for six months, and then 6-8 weeks for testing are required. That would mean August first at the earliest, and by then half the GO fleet will be gone. If gasoline goes up again sharply, as now rumored, the problem will be even worse, as more people try to crowd into fewer cars, straining the system that much more; and should more cuts take place to better utilize remaining equipment--well, you figure it out.

There will be more budget and service crisis situations in 1981 as there is just no way to escape them. When the car crunch comes, what trains remain will be shortened to spread equipment, and mothballed Shoreliners will be activated to the extent they can at minimal cost, but easily three dozen cars may be short during the peak period between outgoing GO cars and incoming rebuilt RDCs. Amtrak dnd MBTA are rumored to again be talking about the former taking over the South Side service, but even if that should happen it is not clear what this would mean for the equipment presently used there.

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